Accelerated Bachelor’s/Master’s Programs: Guidelines & Procedures

Accelerated Bachelor’s/Master’s programs (ABMs) may be developed with the intent to retain exceptional undergraduate students and must be designed to enable them to complete the requirements for both the bachelor's and master's degrees at an accelerated pace. To accommodate the broad variation between disciplines in the arts and sciences, the College has not established a specific format to follow when proposing an ABM. However, ABM proposals must include outcomes similar to a traditional master’s at SLU and meet benchmarking comparisons with ABMs at peer institutions. While a reasonable set of comparable institutions for benchmarking will vary by discipline, the expected default set of institutions should represent comprehensive Jesuit universities and flagship state universities in the Midwest.

The maximum number of credit hours that may be counted toward both the undergraduate and graduate degrees is six. Departments may choose to permit fewer than six hours, or to count such hours as electives for the bachelor’s portion only of the ABM. All ABM proposals require approvals by the CAS Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, the Board of Graduate Education, and the Faculty Council. Final approval is made by the Dean of the College.

Procedures

1. Students normally apply for acceptance to the ABM program during the spring semester of the junior year using the application form available on the CAS website: Faculty and Staff Resources (scroll to the bottom and look under Graduate Education Resources).
2. Departments offering ABM programs may require supporting documentation in addition to that minimally indicated on the form. They may elect to forego the GRE and letters of recommendation based on the department’s first-hand experience with the student. Any supporting documentation (except the goal statement) will be retained by the admitting department.
3. Minimum overall GPA and in the ABM field should be commensurate with admissions standards for a master’s program in the admitting department.
4. Applicants must have completed a minimum of 90 hours toward the bachelor’s degree by the end of the junior year, and 105 hours by the end of fall semester of the senior year. Transfer students must have completed a minimum of 30 hours at SLU.
5. Following conditional admission to the ABM program, the registrar’s office will code students’ records in Banner to identify them as ABM students. However, students remain strictly undergraduates for the purposes of financial aid and scholarships until the bachelor’s degree is awarded.
6. Students accepted to an approved ABM program are not required to complete the “Petition by an Undergraduate to Enroll in Graduate Coursework”. Instead, a registration form must be completed for any graduate courses to be taken. Be sure to note in the Comments section that the student is in the ABM program. Forms must be signed by the graduate program director or department chair. Completed forms are sent to the Associate Dean of Graduate Education in the College who will enter a registration override code and notify students that they may register for the desired graduate course(s).
7. During the undergraduate career, a maximum of six hours of graduate-level coursework will be permitted to count toward both the baccalaureate and graduate degrees. Additional graduate courses may be taken during the undergraduate career but they may count toward the master’s degree only if (a) the credit hours earned are in excess of the number needed to earn the baccalaureate degree; and (b) the student successfully petitions for admission to the master’s program.

8. All graduate coursework will be credited toward the undergraduate program until the degree is conferred. ABM students must receive at least a ‘B’ in graduate courses taken as an undergraduate to maintain eligibility to advance to the master’s level following conferral of the bachelor’s degree.

9. ABM students who have incomplete grades on their undergraduate transcripts will not be permitted to advance to the master’s level until those incompletes are cleared.

10. Once ABM students have completed all requirements for the undergraduate degree and have applied for graduation, they must submit a petition for formal admission to the graduate program. On the petition, the two courses to be double-counted must be listed. Approval of the petition by the department will constitute verification that the student remains eligible to continue to the master’s level. Students may not take coursework beyond the baccalaureate until the admission petition is approved by the associate dean.

11. If additional graduate courses were taken beyond the two permitted to double-count (and in excess of the number of credits required for the baccalaureate), students may submit a Change of Course Level request to the associate dean to convert the excess credits to the graduate level after they have been formally admitted to the master’s program.

12. A graduate-level assistantship for the fifth year may be awarded pending conferral of the bachelor’s degree and approval of the admission petition.

Additional guidelines

- Departments must carefully plan the sequencing and availability of graduate courses to ensure that an ABM program can be completed in an accelerated fashion. In addition, departments must work with students to devise a feasible plan of study and must closely monitor students’ performance.

- ABM programs typically do not provide for a formal transition to graduate studies and their associated demands. Therefore, departments are advised to create an intentional transition and orientation to the extent possible. If departments do not match ABM students with individual advisors, it is also recommended that a designated advisor (e.g. the graduate program director) assume the responsibilities for advising ABM students.